



MARICOPA COUNTY
Environmental Services
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COUNTY OFFERS FOOD SAFETY TIPS FOR SUMMER GROCERY SHOPPING

Keep Food Safe From the Cart to the Kitchen

(Phoenix)—In the Valley heat, it doesn't take long for food to reach the "Temperature Danger Zone," where bacteria multiplies rapidly often causing foodborne illness. As part of the Serve It Safe Arizona summer food safety campaign, Maricopa County environmental health specialists are offering some tips for smart grocery shopping to keep your food safe from the cart to the kitchen.

"The hotter it gets, the more bacteria grows," said David Ludwig, Environmental Health Division Manager. "If it's going to be a while before the chicken you just put in your cart gets into a cold refrigerator, you need to take precautions to keep it cool and out of that danger zone," said Ludwig.

The Temperature Danger Zone is between 40 degrees F and 140 degrees F. Harmful bacteria like Salmonella starts growing at 50 degrees F and multiplies rapidly. For example, on a 98-degree day, chicken placed in the cart and in the trunk of your car can go from 30 degrees to 55 degrees in just ninety minutes. Thinking about food safety at every step can help reduce the risks of getting sick.

Follow these suggestions to keep food out of the danger zone:

1. Shop when it's the coolest—in the morning or late in the evening.
2. Shop for refrigerated or frozen foods last.
3. Do not choose foods with torn or leaking packages.
4. Pack cold items together in a paper bag at the checkout stand. Separate meat from non-meat items.
5. Go straight home from the grocery store. Run your errands before you shop.
6. If you have a long trip home or plan to run errands after shopping, bring a cooler with ice or blue block to transport cold and frozen foods. (Clean blue block before re-using and don't re-use ice.)
7. Once home, refrigerate foods immediately.
8. Leave foods in their original packages.
9. Keep your refrigerator's internal temperature of 40 degrees F or lower.
10. Keep perishables in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

MEDIA ADVISORY:

WHO: MARICOPA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS

WHAT: SAFE SHOPPING DEMONSTRATION

WHEN: TUESDAY, JUNE 19 AT 10:30 A.M.

WHERE: FRY'S AT 4724 N. 20TH ST. (20TH ST. AND HIGHLAND)

How to shop to keep your food out of the temperature danger zone and safe from bacteria.

*****Graphics of actual temperature tracking available.**